

## Socioeconomic Inequality of Elder Abuse in Qazvin, Iran

### Abstract

**Introduction:** Socioeconomic status (SES) is often associated with elder abuse. This study aimed to determine SES inequality of elder abuse in Qazvin, Iran. **Methods:** In this cross-sectional study, 683 (60–95 years) elders were included in the analysis in 2015. Hwalek-Sengstock Elder Abuse Screening Test was used to collect data on elder abuse. SES was measured through an asset-based method and principal component analysis. The concentration index and curve were used to measure SES inequality. **Results:** The concentration index for socioeconomic inequality of elder abuse was  $-0.0290$  (95% confidence interval [CI]:  $-0.0498, -0.0081$ ). This index based on residence showed elder abuse is more concentrated among rural elders with lower SES ( $C = -0.0739$ , 95% CI:  $[-0.112, -0.0356]$ ). **Conclusion:** There is a slightly socioeconomic inequality of elder abuse among elders. Lower SES might be considered as a risk factor for elder abuse. Policymakers should plan for improvement in services to consider the role of SES in elder abuse.

**Keywords:** Concentration index, elder abuse, inequality, Iran, socioeconomic

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### Introduction

Since  $\geq 30$  years ago, elder abuse was recognized as a social and public health problem globally.<sup>[1-3]</sup> It is expected that due to increasing elders' population, the prevalence rate of elder abuse will be increased.<sup>[4]</sup> Because of changing socioeconomic status (SES), the families structure and increasing attention to human rights, elder abuse has been considered more than ago. Structural inequality in different countries that lead to high unemployment, economic problems of a particular stratum of society, and weak health services had an important role in the vulnerability of elders.<sup>[3-5]</sup> Multiple nature of elder abuse and vague definitions of this social phenomenon is much obstacles to identify elder abuse.<sup>[2,6]</sup> Despite increasing elders' population and elder abuse, this phenomenon could be reported underestimate.<sup>[1,7]</sup> Van Den Bruele *et al.* mentioned currently in the United States and Canada that due to social support for the elders and their participation in the social networks, the risk of elder abuse expected to be low but this is the opposite in Nigeria and Asia.<sup>[1]</sup> Now in Iran, the prevalence rate of elder abuse was reported 56.4% (95% confidence interval [CI]: 35.1%–75.5%).<sup>[8]</sup> Because the personal

and familial circumstances of elders were recognized as the main factors and due to the effect of elder abuse on quality of life of elders and their families, it is important to recognize the role of risk factors for preventing the incidence of elder abuse.<sup>[1,7,9]</sup>

According to different studies, elder abuse was associated with the following factors: living with close relatives, dissatisfaction of the household income, less equipped households, lacking property of house, SES, financial independence, and suffering from chronic disease.<sup>[10-15]</sup> Therefore, the importance of SES for elder abuse has been justified. Indeed, many studies reported the association between SES and elder abuse, and the association may be differed by depending on different types of elder abuse.<sup>[15-18]</sup> However, inequality of SES was rarely considered as health problem. Thus, this study aimed to investigate the inequality of social indicators of elder abuse using the concentration index. Based on the results of this study, we may help health policymakers to reduce inequalities in elder abuse by identifying the predictors of socioeconomic inequalities in this social problem among Iranian elders.

### Methods

This cross-sectional study was conducted in Qazvin city that located in the northwestern

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